

Billerica Access Television, Inc.

430 Boston Road

Billerica, MA 01821 telephone: (978) 663-2284 fax: (978)
667-4969

www.batvinc.org

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Federal Communications Commission:

I'm writing to express my opinion regarding pending legislation and cable franchising.

Here in Billerica, Massachusetts, people take pride in their community. In this town of roughly 39,000, there are countless volunteers that participate in community activities, celebrations and local government. This is a community that is proud of their accomplishments.

At the center of Billerica, across from the Public Library, is Billerica Access Television, Inc., the local public, educational, and governmental (PEG) access television facility. The state-of-the art facility is active with students, parents, seniors, government officials, business people and organizational figureheads. BATV is an active clearinghouse for community information, and entertainment.

BATV not only highlights community events and happenings by cablecasting volunteer produced and sponsored programming, but provides educational and social opportunities to individuals and organizations in Billerica. BATV has been involved with every school in Billerica, and in fact, as of this writing, is teaching two after school elementary enrichment programs for sixteen weeks each, assisting a middle school with history and english projects, and assisting the high school A/V Club, while all the time, teaching on-going classes to the public at large and assisting users of PEG services daily.

BATV was incorporated in 1987 and has been providing community service for nearly two decades due to the outstanding discussions / negotiations / relationships between the Town's Cable Advisory Committee and cable providers, currently Comcast. Following the last franchise renewal ascertainment hearing, almost eight years ago, a Continental Cablevision representative said the hearing was a "PEG Access love in" as citizen after citizen lined up to state the need to continue funding for the access corporation.

As I stated earlier, this is a community that is proud of their accomplishments. The cable franchise that allows BATV to provide opportunities, showcase community events, and bring local government into the households of Billerica residents was made possible by local citizens, understanding local needs, and negotiating a cable franchise to meet Billerica's unique, local landscape.

As an individual who understands and works with the Billerica community, I strongly urge the FCC to rule for local cable franchising. Allow communities the opportunity to do what's best for each unique community. After all, who knows what the community "needs" are but the community itself.

I strongly urge you to allow the franchising process to remain as it is. The current process works well.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sam Schauerman